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Page

## Contents of this issue

WE PROUDLY PRESENT THE "NEW" READING TEACHER by Albert J. Harris	3
MEETING THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN by Emmett A. Betts	4
HOW CAN I HELP EVERY CHILD WITH THIRTY OR MORE IN THE CLASSROOM? by Josephine B. Wolfe	13
HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS ALSO NEED INDIVIDUAL HELP IN READING by Ralph Staiger	17
MATERIALS AND EXPERIENCES IN READING TO MEET VARIED NEEDS by Paul Witty	21
WHAT RECENT RESEARCH TELLS US ABOUT DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION IN READING by J. Allen Figurel	27
PARENT READINESS FOR TODAY'S READING METHODS by Nellie Morrison	34
WHAT OTHER MAGAZINES ARE SAYING ABOUT THE TEACHING OF READING by Muriel Potter	39
NEWS OF THE READING COUNCIL by Donald L. Cleland	43

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## We Proudly Present the "New" Reading Teacher

335  
32

by Albert J. Harris

President, I.C.I.R.I.

School of Education, Queens College

Flushing, New York

THIS ISSUE marks the first appearance of THE READING TEACHER as a printed magazine. Last year we were proud of its contents but not so impressed by the office duplicating process that we used. From now on we will have reason to be proud of both content and appearance.

The Editorial Board has decided to continue the much praised plan of having a central theme for each issue. The increase in number of pages allows for several articles on the main theme and in addition, special articles, ICIRI news, book reviews, and other features. Your Editor, Nancy Lerrick, has put untold hours into this issue, from selecting the theme and securing the articles, through choosing type and paper, to reading proof. Her devotion has made the continued improvement of this magazine a reality.

Advertisements appear in this issue. They help to defray the sharp increase in our printing costs, and all advertisements are reviewed by our staff before being accepted. We plan to continue to accept a limited amount of advertising.

The improved appearance and increased size of our magazine is an immediate consequence of the healthy growth in our membership during the past few months. ICIRI

has been expanding at a most encouraging rate. Your officers confidently expect that the new appearance of THE READING TEACHER will bring in hundreds of new members. Show this copy to your friends; some of them will want to join ICIRI in order to receive our magazine regularly. Increased membership has made possible our present vastly improved magazine; further increases in membership will allow us to provide more service and to continue to improve THE READING TEACHER.

### From the Editor

Five articles in this issue deal with the important problem of meeting the needs of individual children. Many of us have given lip-service to the concept of individualized instruction. But when we have faced thirty to forty youngsters bursting with assorted kinds of curiosity and energy, we have sometimes faltered.

Then to steady our own uncertainties, we have often clung to the old way of all working together at the same tasks and at the same pace.

We hope that the group of articles in this issue of THE READING TEACHER give enough information and specific suggestions to encourage you to improve your way of meeting the needs of each child.

## Meeting the Needs of Individual Children

by Emmett Albert Betts  
Director, The Reading Clinic  
Temple University, Philadelphia

IMPROVEMENT of reading instruction begins with the study of individual differences. For generations, students of learning have piled up overwhelming evidence on the basic truth of the admonition: *begin where the learner is*. As one eight-year-old remarked, "You can't do it high if you can't do it low." (6)

Reduced to elementary terms, the improvement of reading abilities embraces three steps:

1. Estimating the learner's "level" of achievement.
2. Beginning instruction at the learner's level of achievement.
3. Guiding the learner in the formation of concepts and in the development of language "skills" so that he moves to higher levels.

"Beginning where the learner is" has been demonstrated as the starting point of instruction. There is no exaggeration whatsoever in this statement: If every learner in this country could begin to read on his own "level" tomorrow morning, reading abilities would be improved significantly. (4)

(The term *level* is assumed to be a point on a learning *curve* rather than an actual plateau, or level.)

### Differences

Much lip service has been given to individual differences. Many books and hundreds of articles have been

published on this topic. (2, 5) In spite of this flow of words, investigations of classroom practices yield indisputable evidence that regimentation in one form or another is still the order of the day. An all-out effort to differentiate instruction in elementary and secondary schools is yet to be made.

*The Problem.* There are two facets of the "differences" problem. First, there are differences among individuals in a group. For many reasons, the range of these differences in language development, for example, is not understood. (4)

Second, there are differences in the achievements of a given individual. This variability of achievement in language, arithmetic, art, music, etc., by an individual is as significant as the differences among individuals in a group. (1, Ch. XIV)

*First Grade Entrants.* Upon admission to the first grade, a few pupils can do some reading. Some are ready for their first steps in reading; others vary considerably in readiness for reading. They range in chronological age from about five to six and one-half years; in mental age, from about four and one-half years to eight or more years. These differences are multiplied by variations in personalities, interests, experience, attitudes, motivations, etc.

Differences among first grade entrants are wide and varied; they are real. Furthermore, a given individual may have considerable aptitude for art and very little aptitude for music. He may have unusual language facility and a meager stock of number concepts. And so on. Individual variability may be as great as the individual differences within the group. In brief, each individual is unique unto himself. (1, Ch. XIV)

*Flexible Grouping.* The wide range of individual differences in a class or group and the variability within the individual make necessary differentiated guidance in beginning reading instruction. For teaching purposes, the class is organized into effective social groups. This grouping is flexible in the sense that differences in concept development and oral language achievement (as prerequisites for reading achievement) are considered.

It is also flexible in the sense that specific interests and needs are recognized. For example, one in about twenty pupils requires an approach to word learning (word perception) and word recognition (knowing the word again) different from that required by his classmates.

*Range of Differences.* As pupils move through the elementary school, the range of difference in readiness for beginning reading instruction approaches zero. Most of them have acquired some basic reading "skills" by the age of nine years. However, the range of reading achievement is increased.

Upon admission to grade two, a few children are still in the read-

ing readiness stage. At the other end of the scale are those pupils who enjoy reading materials at the "third-reader" level of readability.

This relatively wide range of achievement levels in reading is slowly and surely increased. Surveys show that typical fourth-grade entrants range in reading ability from about zero to "seventh-reader" level. At the fifth grade level, the range is from zero to "twelfth-reader" level.

In the "good old days" many low achievers dropped out of school at the sixth or eighth grade levels. Today, there are fewer withdrawals. As a result, the range of differences continues to increase in the junior and senior high schools where the range is sixteen years or more. (4, 18)

*Verification of Differences.* The above are some facts regarding differences among individuals and differences within individuals. They can be verified within a school system or a classroom.

Many of the facts on differences have been obtained by means of standardized tests as well as by means of informal observations. (5, Ch. XXI) However, for many reasons, standardized tests of reading often do not reveal these differences. On many of the present tests, a low achiever tends to obtain a score which is one to four grades above the level of the instructional materials he can read. Furthermore, some tests yield only a four or five year range of achievement, which, of course, does not square with the facts. (4)

*Conclusions.* Some of the conclusions from studies in this area are summarized:

1. First grade entrants present a wide range of individual differences in oral language achievement.
2. At successive age or grade levels, the range of differences in language development is increased.
3. The range of differences at a given age or grade level is greater than the average difference between two successive grade levels.
4. There is almost as much variability within the individual as there are differences among individuals in a class or group. That is, an individual's abilities (e.g., language facility, music, numbers) tend to be relatively independent of each other.
5. A group with approximately the same achievement level in reading varies widely in abilities required for arithmetic computation, music, art, science, etc.
6. Provision for individual needs rather than non-promotion of low-achievers and retarded readers appears to be the key to the problem.

### Basic Concepts

Research has continued to pave the way for both the effective recognition of and provision for individual differences and needs within the classroom. First, informal procedures for estimating reading levels have been developed. (5, Ch. XXI) Second, both objective and informal techniques have been developed for estimating the readability level, or reading difficulty, of instructional materials. (7) For making an informal reading inventory, materials graded in readability are used.

The procedure for estimating reading levels is direct and effective. An

individual (or a group) is presented with a graded series of selections, books, or current events papers. He begins at a low level and reads short selections at succeeding levels until he either no longer understands what he reads or no longer can pronounce the words.

*Basal Reading Level.* The highest reader (or readability) level at which an individual can read with understanding and with *no* symptoms of difficulty is herein called the *basal* reading level. The reading is done with ease. There are no symptoms of frustration such as word-by-word reading, lip movement, finger pointing, etc. The term *basal level* is not important but the concept is. (5, Ch. XXI)

The basal level is a useful starting point when the individual has overlearned the use of crutches, such as lip movement. Usually the learner reads at a higher level.

*Independent Reading Level.* The highest reader (or readability) level at which an individual can read without teacher help is herein called the *independent* reading level. At this level, the learner has *no* symptoms of difficulty. Again, the term *independent* reading level is not important but the concept is. (5, Ch. XXI)

There is *one* major difference between the basal reading level and the independent reading level: word recognition needs. At the basal level, there are no word recognition problems. At the independent level, the individual with less than second-or third-reader ability can cope with one "new" word in about 200 running words.

An individual with more reading ability can cope with one "new" word in about 100 running words. The more mature reader's word recognition skills usually are more highly developed and, therefore, he can cope with more "new" words without symptoms of frustration.

This concept of the independent reading level is basic to differentiated reading instruction. First, the individual needs this information so that he has a basis for the intelligent selection of reading materials. Second, the school librarian needs this information in order to guide her "customers" to readable books which build long-time reading interests. Third, parents need this information for the purchase of readable books for their children.

Fourth, the classroom teacher uses this information on independent reading levels as a basis for guiding independent reading activities. If she is using a basal reader, she suggests "follow-up" or extensive reading in materials which the learners can deal with independently. If she makes maximum use of current events materials, she obtains materials suitable for the range of independent reading levels in the class. If she is making use of a core-curriculum, or experience, approach to reading, she uses materials that are *never* above the independent reading levels of her pupils.

Fifth, individuals in speed reading classes work at their independent reading levels, emphasizing assimilative rather than critical reading techniques. In regular classrooms, teachers have improved the rates of comprehension by more than 100 percent,

using the independent reading levels as the basis for the selection of materials.

One of the goals of reading instruction is to develop independent reading and study habits. To achieve this goal, the teacher assumes full responsibility for differentiating instruction in terms of the independent reading levels of her pupils.

*Instructional Reading Level.* The highest reader (or readability) level at which an individual can read under teacher guidance is herein called the *instructional* reading level. Usually an individual can read more difficult material under teacher guidance than he can read "on his own."

There is one major difference between the independent and the instructional reading level: comprehension and word recognition needs. During the first, or silent, reading, the individual may meet a *maximum* of one "new" word in twenty running words without symptoms of frustration. Usually, however, more progress is made when an average of about one "new" word in forty or fifty is met. When the reading is burdened by too many new words and concepts, symptoms of difficulty appear.

At the instructional as well as at the basal and independent reading levels, there is a high level of comprehension. The reading is done without evidence of finger pointing, tension movements, etc. The first — i.e., silent — reading of a selection is done without lip movement, finger pointing, tension, etc. The rereading—silent or oral — is characterized by rhythm, accurate interpretation of

punctuation, and freedom from word recognition errors.

A sensible approach to the prevention of reading difficulties is to avoid the use of materials which induce symptoms of frustration. Certainly there is no justification in drilling the learner into the use of crutches, such as lip movement, by frustrating him day after day.

### Hearing Comprehension

One index to capacity reading is hearing comprehension. The hearing comprehension level is estimated by reading to the individual from graded reading materials. The highest level at which the individual can understand what is read to him is herein called the hearing comprehension level. (5, pp. 452-454)

It is reasonable to assume that the individual's instructional reading level should be about the same as his hearing comprehension level. The amount that the hearing comprehension level exceeds the instructional reading level is the amount of retardation in reading. An effective developmental reading program maintains the instructional reading level at the hearing comprehension level.

By using an informal hearing comprehension inventory, the teacher differentiates between slow learners and retarded readers. This avoids the fallacy of trying to bring all learners up to "class average."

### Directed Reading Activities

The chief purpose of reading instruction is, of course, to raise the learner's level of competence in reading. The procedure used for improv-

ing reading ability is called a *directed reading activity*.

There are many legitimate procedures for directing reading activities. The approach is dictated by the type of material, the concepts, techniques, skills to be developed, etc.

*Basal Reader Approach.* When so-called basal materials (e.g., basal readers or current events materials) are used, the learners are grouped in terms of their instructional reading levels. The lowest achiever in the group meets no more than one "new" word in twenty running words; the highest achiever, no more than one in about eighty running words. In short, there is a relatively wide range of achievement levels within a reading group.

Before reading a selection, the pupils are oriented or prepared for the content. Basic concepts are developed to improve word recognition and comprehension. Pupil questions are used as the basis for motivation.

The first reading is done silently for many reasons. During this silent reading and/or immediately thereafter, specific help is given on comprehension and word recognition problems. For example, the teacher notes the elements in the words which cause the word recognition problems, classifies the needs, and gives direct help on those needs. (5, Ch. XXIV) Likewise, she notes the specific problems in comprehension, classifies them, and gives direct help on those needs. (11)

Before the directed reading activity, a given selection is at the instructional level of the pupils. The learning during the orientation and the

first reading brings the selection down to the independent reading level of the learners. Hence, the rereading — silent or oral — is done at the independent reading level.

This use of basal reading materials insures independence in reading-study activities. No teacher needs to apologize for the use of basal textbooks. They offer advantages that are unique.

*Experience Approach.* The experience or core-curriculum approach to reading instruction is made in terms of areas, or centers, of interest. Much of the planning is done with the entire class to evaluate "what they know" and to organize an ever-growing list of questions on "what we want to know" about the topic.

The class, then, is organized into groups to deal with specific areas of interest relevant to the class project. This grouping by interest areas brings together individuals with a wide range of achievement levels. This plan, therefore, requires the directing of reading activities in terms of this range.

For the experience approach, the learners are guided to materials that can be read at the independent reading level. One of the purposes of this type of reading activity is to bring the material down from the learner's independent reading level to his basal reading level.

In a comprehensive program of differentiated reading instruction, provision is made for both the basal reader and the "experience" approaches. Each approach makes a unique contribution to the improvement of reading abilities.

*Group Inventories.* Occasionally there is a real need for administering an informal reading inventory on an individual basis. However, the important use of the technique is in a group reading situation. Each directed reading activity offers an opportunity for the informal observation of reading levels and needs.

#### Differentiated Guidance

In a healthy social climate, the learners know their levels of achievement and are motivated by an awareness of their needs. The chief purpose of any procedure for differentiating instruction is to provide equal opportunities for learning. Other things being equal, the materials of instruction are selected in terms of the independent and instructional reading levels as well as the interests and specific needs of the learners.

How individual needs are met in the classroom depends upon many factors: the social climate of the classroom, the professional competence of the teacher, the availability of appropriate instructional materials, etc. Not the least of these is the social climate of the classroom. This climate, in turn, depends upon the extent to which guidance is differentiated in the several classroom activities. When special aptitudes are recognized in music, art, science, mathematics, and so on, each learner comes into his own.

Furthermore, many opportunities for putting differentiated guidance on a sound social basis grow out of activities involving the entire class. John and Mary bring ideas gleaned from *My Weekly Reader II* or from

other "easy" reading. Jack and Martha may organize information from Compton's *Pictured Encyclopedia*, *The World Book Encyclopedia*, a world almanac, or some other reference. The success of a plan for differentiated guidance depends to no small degree on class rather than small group or individual activities.

*Individual Help.* Differentiated guidance is not completely individualized guidance. While learning is an individual activity, teaching is usually done with a class or a group. However, there is a definite need for some individual help in any classroom.

The prevention of reading difficulties is not achieved by more individual attention, as is the popular belief. It is the kind, or quality, of individual attention given that produces results. For example, drilling on lists of isolated words to overcome a word learning or a word recognition problem can be silly and fruitless — whether the drilling is done in an individual or in a group situation.

Then, again, requiring an individual to read orally at sight materials that are too difficult is a double-barreled method of developing strong attitudes of withdrawal from reading situations — whether done in an individual or a group situation. The professional competence of the teacher in giving appropriate instruction is the "secret" to preventive guidance.

Occasionally, an individual doesn't "get the hang" of consonant blends, vowel digraphs, or some other element in word recognition. Or, he doesn't quite "click" on an idiom or a figurative expression. In these in-

stances, a few minutes of help on a specific need may prevent days, weeks, or months of frustration. Individual help "rifled" at a very specific need is a small but an essential part of differentiated guidance. (4)

*Grouping.* There are many legitimate ways to group learners for effective instruction. At this point, three of these ways will be outlined.

(1) At present, the grouping of learners in terms of their *instructional reading levels* appears to be highly desirable. This approach appears to be justified when the materials are graded not only from book to book but also within the book. (4)

(2) Frequently small groups are organized within the classroom to clear up specific *reading needs*. For example, a group may be organized for one or more sessions for direct help on alphabetizing, outlining, using the index, interpreting respellings in the dictionary, discriminating between the sounds of syllables, differentiating between fact and opinion, drawing conclusions from related facts, or a number of other specific word recognition or comprehension needs. When these needs are identified in a directed reading activity, the situation is ripe for direct help on a specific need. This is learning based on "felt needs." (4)

(3) Most textbooks in science and the social studies — at all school levels — are organized by units. These units include a wide variety of "subjects": Eskimos, the Revolution, primitive man, conservation, light, heat, etc. Since a single textbook is not readable by all members of a class, there is added reason for a so-

called experience, or unit, approach.

Grouping in terms of *reading interests* requires a high level of professional competence and access to valid information on the readability of appropriate materials. It requires a knowledge of techniques for studying differences among individuals and within individuals. The teacher works hand-in-hand with the librarian. Special attention is given to estimating the independent reading levels and the interests of the learners. Moreover, systematic guidance is given in all reading-study situations.

### Summary

The key to the improvement of reading instruction is guidance in terms of individual needs. This approach to improvement requires professional competence in estimating reading levels, in classifying and providing direct help on specific needs, in conducting class activities which yield effective human relationships, and in organizing informal group and individual activities to meet special needs and interests.

Differentiated guidance challenges all learners from the low achievers to the high achievers. The day when differentiated guidance is used as a device for bringing all low achievers "up to grade level" has passed. The goal is to help each individual achieve to the limits of his capacity, to develop his own personality to the full.

Discussions of the concept approach to word learning and recognition, of critical thinking in reading situations, of group dynamics, and other "newer" practices are futile until an honest all-out effort is made

to learn the individual before teaching him in class or small group situations. Before major revisions of the curriculum are undertaken, differentiated guidance must become a reality — an accepted practice rather than a shibboleth, or meaningless password, to modern education. To this proposition there simply is no valid rebuttal.

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### New Magazines for Children

This fall several new magazines for children have made their appearance. One of these is *J.A.C. (Junior American Citizen)* published by Scholastic Magazines. This is a weekly magazine for Grades 4-5.

*Humpty Dumpty's Magazine* is put out by the publishers of *Children's Digest and Parents' Magazine*. It contains some stories and a large proportion of cut-and-color material.

*Silver Bells* is being distributed through Charles E. Tuttle of Rutland, Vermont. This is the English language edition of a beautifully illustrated Japanese magazine of the same name.

## **How Can I Help Every Child With Thirty or More in a Classroom?**

by Josephine B. Wolfe

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ALTHOUGH school administrators and teachers are constantly aware of the range of differences that exist in their classrooms, the familiar question prevails, "How can any one person be expected to help *every child individually*—with thirty or more in a classroom?" The effectiveness and ease with which this question can be answered depend largely upon the policies and the practices on which the classroom experiences are built.

As observed by The Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English, "Individual differences among students at any age-grade level may be a challenge to creative teaching or grounds for passive despair."<sup>1</sup>

Because pupils vary widely in their rate of maturation and capacity to learn, their interests, their diversity of experiences, and their social and emotional habits, it is important that the teacher accepts each pupil as she finds him. She should be alert and ready to provide differentiated instruction that will free all children to work within reasonable limits of capacities. The "do's" and "don't's" that have

served as guide posts in developing the differentiated instruction will be presented in this article.

### **Bases for Grouping**

Through informal and systematic inventories, teacher observations, interest inventories, and standardized tests, teachers are able to discover latent potentialities, faulty habits and skills, and the present level of reading instruction for each individual. The Individual Informal Inventory<sup>2</sup> may be administered on an individual basis, or if the teacher possesses sufficient skill, a Group Informal Appraisal may be used.

Any good standardized reading test has its place in a modern reading program and may be used to supplement the informal inventories and teacher judgment. Standard tests may be used to compare the achievement of a class with national norms, identify those pupils below and above the class average, as well as compare the achievement of individuals with their capacities for achievement. However, the teacher must allow for the fact that standardized tests may rate pupils from one to four

<sup>1</sup> The Commission on The English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English, *The English Language Arts*. New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc., 1952, p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Betts, Emmett A. *Foundations of Reading Instruction*. New York: American Book Company (Revised 1950).

grades above their actual achievement levels.<sup>3</sup>

A less scientific, but justifiable basis for grouping, is the systematic observation of each individual pupil as he participates in his reading group. Since reading groups usually average more than six or eight pupils, it provides less opportunity for individual observation by the teacher than the Individual Informal Inventory or Group Informal Appraisal.

### The Number of Groups

In most classrooms today there are usually at least three reading groups in the lower grades. Although the two-group plan is generally found in the upper grades, the four-group plan is recommended. The number of groups will depend upon the size and various needs of one class, and to the professional competency of the teacher. The latter is not achieved overnight or in a four-year college curriculum. It requires a pleasing personality, a well-rounded social adjustment, broad scholarship, and the added technical touch or gift for teaching.

Four and five groups can be handled effectively and efficiently when, and if, a general plan of procedural steps is well developed by the teacher. However, a teacher should never plan for more groups than she feels she can provide for with ease. She must feel qualified within for the task she is to undertake, and become a friendly guide and counselor to the class rather than a drillmaster.

<sup>3</sup> Killgallon, P. A. *A Study of Relationships Among Certain Pupil Adjustments in Reading Situations*, Doctor's Dissertation, State College, Pa.: Pennsylvania State College, 1942.

### Procedures for Developing Group Work

If we are to accept the philosophy that "we will begin where the pupil is and will take him as far as he can go," it is necessary to adopt a differentiated program as our method of living in the classroom. This is necessary if we hope to achieve the objectives of education which we have set forth for ourselves. The following steps are suggested in providing for equal learning activities in the classroom:

*Step 1. Planning and Evaluating.* Teachers need to do two types of planning—long range and short range. Although all planning should be kept flexible, teachers need to estimate the long term monthly and yearly needs as well as the immediate daily needs of each group. Pupil-teacher planning and evaluating should be a daily procedure in every classroom.

When pupils are given the opportunity to help the first thing each morning in planning the day's work, they will know where they are, where they are going, and what they are doing to achieve their respective goals. Pupil-teacher evaluation at the close of the school day will serve as an aid for future planning as well as an excellent public relations device. However, teachers should not fail to observe that sound teacher planning and evaluating should precede all pupil-teacher activity, regardless of other demands.

*Step 2. Management of Groups in Action.* Three reading groups are usually considered a sufficient number for the teacher of the lower grades to

care for with efficiency and ease. With three groups it is recommended that each group meet daily for at least one reading lesson from a basal reader, the period lasting no longer than 20 to 30 minutes. Several related reading or language activities are provided daily in addition to, at least, a good curricular reading period (social studies, science, etc.), a news reading period or a free reading period.

A wider range of reading abilities can be expected as grade levels increase. Therefore, four reading groups are usually recommended for the upper grade levels. A rotating procedure is suggested—two groups meeting one day for a 20 to 30 minute reading lesson from a basal reader and the two other groups the following day.

While one group is working under teacher guidance, the other three groups are working independently on related or follow-up activities. Many related reading and language activities in addition to curricular reading periods, a news reading period, or a free reading period are included in the daily plan. Although some teachers prefer working with two or three groups, greater success has been found when more opportunities are provided for each pupil to work at his own level. However, any procedure that yields success should be considered an effective plan.

***A Cooperative Plan of Action.*** The foundation on which a differentiated program is built depends upon the cooperative spirit that exists between the teacher and the class. A teacher cannot develop such a program with-

out the help of her pupils. Using a set of criteria developed by the class, each group selects a chairman. Then, the teacher assists the chairmen in learning their respective duties set forth by their class. The following is a typical list of these duties:

1. To see that all materials are properly distributed and cared for at the beginning and closing of each work period and class period.
  2. To have at his command all directions and pertinent information needed by his group to carry on work successfully.
  3. To answer all questions and care for the needs of his group, and thus avoid interrupting the teacher while she is guiding other groups.
  4. To "check" his follow-up activities with the teacher in order that he may be able to "check" the work of the members of his group whenever he is designated to do so by the teacher.
  5. To observe that all the work assigned by the teacher is completed by each member of his group.
  6. To report all "unfinished" work done by the members of his group to the teacher.
  7. To help "train" other members of his group as each is given the opportunity to become a chairman. (Chairmen usually are changed approximately every two weeks. Unsuccessful chairmen are given further opportunities as certain habits and qualities have been improved.)
- Step 3. Techniques in Skill Development.*** The teacher needs to familiarize herself with the reading skills specified for each grade level found in teachers' guides and manuals.

The teacher needs to be creative in planning many activities to give further practice in developing and maintaining all skills in addition to the suggestions found in manuals and workbooks.

A definite plan should be outlined daily or weekly for each group to provide for introducing new skills and maintaining the skills previously introduced.

The teacher should seize every opportunity to use the reading skills in all other areas of learning.

Continuous appraisal should be a part of the daily procedure in each reading group. Grouping should always be flexible enough to meet class and individual needs, develop individual and group rapport and provide equal learning activities. Flexibility in grouping promotes success in any classroom.

#### **Reporting and Interpreting**

##### **Pupil Progress**

Pupil progress and growth in a program of differentiated instruction should be based on the comparison of each child's achievement with his own capacity. The individual is never compared with his classmates. The A-B-C and numerical markings used in the past have little or no value if used to make comparisons among children in the class. A successful method of reporting and interpreting pupil progress is that of providing a report card where the pupil's progress is checked as *Outstanding Progress, Satisfactory Progress, Shows Improvement, or Needs Improvement.*

All evaluations are made in the

light of the individual child's own capabilities and efforts. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled periodically to supplement the report cards. The parent is told the level at which the child is working and why he is working at his particular level. Information is shared that is helpful in understanding the child. Parent-teacher conferences not only contribute to a better understanding of the child, but provide opportunity to interpret the school program to the parent and the home program to the teacher.

#### **What to Expect**

There are limitations that should be anticipated in planning and developing a program of differentiated instruction, especially by the teacher who is attempting this program for the first time. The following list of "don't's" may guide you safely past the pitfalls.

1. *Don't move too rapidly in developing the program in your school and community.* A differentiated program should be built slowly and firmly. Much parent education, staff education and pupil education is needed. Work quietly; don't laud your program or your uses of differentiation. The result will be your greatest evidence of growth.

2. *Don't begin by having too many groups in the classroom.* You will find it wiser to establish a feeling of success with two groups. You can increase the number of groups as you acquire competency through experience.

3. *Don't be discouraged if your*  
*Continued on page 45*

## **High School Pupils Also Need Individual Help in Reading**

*by Ralph Staiger*

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HAVE YOU noticed a slight change in high school teachers' grousing about their pupils' reading ability during the past few years? This once took the form of indignant condemnation of elementary school teaching methods.

Of the intelligent secondary school teachers who investigated lower school reading methods, many came away impressed. The carefully planned language arts programs were far superior to what they had expected and their basic complaint, the supposed lack of phonics teaching, was shown to be unfounded.

In most modern schools, they saw that systematic instruction was being given at the learner's level, and that phonics was being taught, although it had been relegated to its rightful place as one aid to word recognition.

Imitation, it has been said, is the sincerest form of flattery. A ninth grade English teacher who visited a first grade class came away with three teaching ideas which she put to use that very afternoon in her high school classes. Needless to say, the tenor of her complaints changed.

The secondary school teachers who were the first to soft-pedal their righteous indignation were the ones who examined what is being done at the

elementary level. They learned, if they did not already know so, that the pattern of continuous development of language skills throughout an individual's life was being taken into consideration at the lower level. Their negative complaints became a positive request for continuing the teaching of reading at the high school level.

What is the situation a high school teacher can expect to find? William S. Gray has proposed a division of the high school population according to reading ability which suggests answers to this question.

### **Grouping in High School**

In a large high school, we can expect that the student body will fall into four classifications as far as reading ability is concerned. The groups vary in size from school to school, depending upon the background of the population and the type of educational program of the community. In a heterogeneous class group, which a teacher can expect to find, some members of each group may be included.

*First, some pupils may be in the developmental group.* In certain schools, half of the students will be in this group; in others, fewer or more than half. These pupils have

reading abilities which compare favorably with other pupils in the same grade, and are in line with their average or above average capacities. These are the students who can be expected to read successfully any reasonable assignment. Their reading abilities are not fully developed, however, and the teacher must expect to continue cultivating their growth. These pupils conform to the expectations of the academic teachers who wish there were many more of them.

*In the second classification or corrective group* are the children who rightfully belong in the developmental group on the basis of their capacity for academic work. Their reading skills, however, do not measure up to their capacity. Somewhere along the line they slipped behind the higher achieving group. This slip might have been due to illness, interrupted schooling, moving from the community, poor teaching, or other causes. These members of the corrective group need help in developing their skills to their full potential, and usually profit greatly from proper instruction.

*The third classification is composed of children of limited capacity*, who will never be able to compete academically with the members of the first two groups. Their reading skills have sometimes been developed as fully as their limited capacity enables; it is folly to expect more of them. In most cases, however, they are able to make limited improvement. Certainly they should not be permitted merely to occupy space in the classrooms. Any improvement is welcome.

*The fourth group is made up of*

*those requiring individual clinical instruction.* Happily this is an extremely small group. These children have reading disabilities so extreme they cannot be taught to read in an ordinary classroom situation, but require special help. Often they are able to achieve successfully in non-academic areas, but are lost when faced with the need to read. Many do not reach high school, but occasionally one may do so. When he does, the best plan is to refer him to a reading clinic for a complete diagnosis, and to follow the recommendations made.

One warning must be given about the interpretation of group intelligence tests with poor readers. Most intelligence tests given to class groups involve considerable reading, and so the poor reader is penalized. A group test of intelligence should not be accepted as valid for an individual with retarded reading ability. An individual intelligence test, such as the Stanford-Binet or Wechsler-Bellevue tests should be used when doubt exists.

#### **Helping in Various Groups**

If a high school teacher can expect so many different types of pupils in his classes, what can he do about it? Good teachers have differentiated among their pupils for generations; they have consciously or unconsciously not expected the same caliber of work from Amos A. as from Freddie F. This is the basis for all types of differentiation.

A further step might be giving different assignments to different individuals, according to their needs and interests, with reports to be made to

the class. This is a step in the process of getting away from the single textbook, from the regimented class.

Next, a group assignment might be given. The first one should be short, and easily completed. Pupils must be taught to do group work, and teachers must learn to plan for it.

For a teacher who has been accustomed to leading all class activities it is not easy to guide the activity from afar. And it is not easy for pupils who have always accepted the dictates of a teacher to continue work if the teacher is not superintending. Both teacher and pupils must learn their parts. One important by-product of group work is the acceptance of responsibility on the part of the pupils. We do not learn to accept responsibility unless we are given responsibility.

There is no such thing as a completely homogeneous group. Pupils have abilities, interests, and traits which make them different. Nevertheless, it is helpful if the administrative organization of a school permits a kind of homogeneous grouping for reading instruction. This narrows the range of differences for the teacher. Dr. Gray's classification of pupils is useful in planning such "homogeneous" classes. In many schools, especially small ones, this cannot be done. There are many other ways of differentiating among pupils.

It is probable that small group work within the class is the most efficient means of reaching all students with worthwhile instruction. Usually, in a class, several pupils will show a need for the same type of help. Those individuals who need to improve their

word recognition skills, for instance, can work together in one group; those whose comprehension is not adequate can do a different type of work; those whose study skills need development can be occupied in another group. Each class will be different. A teacher must learn to recognize these deficiencies. Standardized tests tell part of the story, and informal observation of word pronunciation errors, apparent lack of comprehension, and inability to retain what is "studied" furnish other clues to the needs of pupils.

One good screening device is the informal spelling survey. By taking a representative sampling of the words at the various elementary grade levels of any good series of spellers, the pupils can be tested on their ability to spell words from grades two or three to eight. If a student has difficulty spelling words which are studied in fourth grade, these are the words he should learn to spell, not the ninth grade words. It has been found that pupils learn most efficiently if they study the words at the lowest level at which they attain a score of seventy-five or eighty-eight percent in the sampling.

Pupils who have word recognition difficulties usually profit greatly by this type of work in spelling. A pupil in the "corrective" group can usually complete the lower grade spelling lessons very quickly, often a grade in two or three months. He should pass on to the next higher grade level as fast as he can.

The greatest advantage of such spelling instruction for the student who has trouble in recognizing strange words is that in the spelling

workbook he is led to make generalizations about the form and structure of words, about the phonetic and structural principles which govern many—but not all—English words, and to become more conscious of words than he has ever been. This attention to the details in words has helped many high school students see words as they have never seen them before. Nothing appears to work as well as this with high school pupils of low word-recognition ability.

The busy teacher will find that spelling workbooks make the administration of a class with several different spelling groups relatively easy. The better readers can dictate words to the others, when necessary; much of the remaining work can be done by the individual with little help. The checking of the books, although it can be done by better pupils, should always be closely supervised by the teacher. Planning for the class activities, of course, is essential.

Every high school teacher, no matter what his subject, should recognize

the paramount importance of clarifying the meanings of technical terms encountered in his subject. It is never safe, at any level, to assume that all pupils will understand the meanings of all the terms they will encounter.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to teach the meanings of words before his pupils will be expected to read them. This is easily done in discussion. Many of the students who are referred to a reading specialist as "poor readers" merely do not understand the terminology of the subject being read. In some subjects, an entirely new language must be learned. The teacher often forgets that just because the concepts and methods of presentation are familiar to him, after thirty years of experience with them, they are not necessarily known by the fourteen-year-olds he is teaching.

The grousers are still with us. One of them recently remarked, to his eternal credit, "Let's forget whose fault it is, and get to work teaching these pupils what they need to know to read well."

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## **Materials and Experiences in Reading To Meet Varied Needs**

by Paul Witty

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TWO EMPHASSES are conspicuous today in efforts to improve reading instruction in our schools. The first relates to the provision of reading experiences to satisfy the wide range of abilities found in every class or grade throughout the elementary and the secondary school.

Thus, studies show that a typical fourth grade will include children whose reading abilities range from second to seventh grade. And among pupils graduating from the eighth grade one will often find reading proficiencies ranging from fourth to twelfth grade levels. In fact, in one large city, more than one-fourth of the elementary school graduates made scores that fell at or below the sixth grade norm on standard tests. And another fourth earned scores that placed them near or above the tenth grade level. This wide range of ability persists in classes throughout the high school, and presents a challenge to every teacher.

One of the most significant movements in the area of reading centers in the provision of reading materials designed to satisfy these differences in ability and graded so as to promote continuous growth. This is a part of the developmental approach to read-

ing widely advocated by leaders in this field.

### **Basic Needs and Reading**

The second emphasis relates to the provision of reading designed to satisfy changing developmental needs. Increasingly, writers of the professional literature of education have stressed the contribution of reading to personality development and to individual happiness. They assert that some kinds of reading materials can be employed to help children and young people understand themselves better. Others may be used to provide information of value in engendering an appreciation of people and of society. Still others may prove the source of great individual pleasure because of their close relationship to particular interests. Thus reading materials may be employed to satisfy the basic needs of boys and girls.

In recent years, authors of books on the teaching of English have suggested the use of books to offer pupils reading closely associated with their needs. For example, Lenrow compiled comprehensive lists of books designed to aid pupils in understanding themselves and their personal environment, in comprehending social

problems and issues, and in finding "escape" or entertainment. (12) In 1940, the writer of this article described some results of the use of this approach in teaching English. (20)

Directly following World War II, the use of books to satisfy basic needs was endorsed by the committee which prepared books on reading for the National Society for the Study of Education. Improved personal and social adjustment was set forth as one of the objectives of reading instruction. (14) Within the past year or two, writers have repeatedly emphasized the personal values of reading. Alvina Treut Burrows described the progress elementary school teachers are making in studying the interests and needs of pupils and in devising effective individual programs of reading. (4) Dwight L. Burton, too, pointed out that the high school teacher, like the elementary school teacher, should be primarily concerned with books to meet pupil needs—not with prescribed lists of books. (5) John DeBoer also commented on this emphasis in modern schools:

"Instruction in literature today undertakes, in addition to the development of pleasure, appreciation and discernment in the reading of worthy literature, the cultivation of personal, social and spiritual insights and such modifications of personality as will result in desirable behavioral changes." (7)

The value of reading experience in serving the needs of children and young people is gaining recognition and acceptance. In periodicals, as well as in professional books on read-

ing, one finds increased attention to the interest factor. For example, The American Library Association has been active in the development of subject indexes. Through a subject index, one may readily identify stories in trade and text books on the topics or interests treated in the different grades. (15) The Cadmus reading guide, *Growing with Books*, provides a similar service in helping teachers locate books related to the topics treated in the curricula of most schools. (11) Perhaps the most notable recent tendency to classify children's literature according to topics or interests is the *Combined Book Exhibit* which includes an annotated list of a large number of recently published children's books conveniently arranged in this way. (13)

#### **Developmental Tasks and Reading**

The foregoing tendency to use books to serve children's needs and purposes for reading is a logical outgrowth of an earlier effort which received widespread acceptance during the period 1930-1940. Encouragement was given to teachers to study the needs of children and to practice mental health in the classroom. Clinical workers, too, stressed this approach in working with individual cases. For example, at Northwestern University, the writer and his associates have for many years believed that all children referred to the Psycho-Educational Clinic may be best understood and helped by studying their behavior in relationship to basic human needs.

This approach proved effective in

dealing with various types of cases. Gradually the list of needs was extended and was employed in working with reading problems. After a child was carefully studied, reading experiences were frequently recommended in accord with "derived needs" or "developmental needs." The "derived needs" resembled the "developmental tasks" set forth by Robert J. Havighurst and others.

According to Havighurst, a developmental task "arises at or about a certain period in the life of an individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society and difficulty with later tasks . . ." (6, 8)

Following is the list of "developmental needs" which is now being used for guiding reading at the Northwestern University Psycho-Educational Clinic:

1. Developing competency in physical skills or recreational pursuits.

2. Understanding oneself and developing an adequate satisfying ideal of self.

3. Understanding one's social environment and adjusting oneself to one's peers.

4. Understanding one's place in a family group and achieving independence of adults.

5. Achieving academic competency including the ability and inclination to read.

6. Developing skills in listening and in oral and written expression.

7. Understanding and making desirable adjustments determined by the role of sex.

8. Achieving an understanding of vocations and of occupational demands.

9. Participation in and enjoyment of the arts.

10. Developing an appreciation of scientific discovery and of life in the modern technological world.

11. Understanding the basic premises of our society and recognizing one's responsibility for successful participation in democratic life.

It is clear that there is continuity in developmental needs at different age levels. For this reason, the above single list has been employed in the Psycho-Educational Clinic, although it is sometimes subdivided further for particular groups. Study of children in terms of these developmental needs has proved particularly helpful in guiding the reading of elementary and secondary pupils referred to the Clinic. This approach has even greater possibilities when it is widely applied in public schools.

#### **Directing Pupils to Appropriate Books**

The teacher who seeks to guide reading in accord with needs must have certain facts and information about boys and girls. She must know each child's level of attainment in silent or oral reading in order that a successful reading program may be planned. The results of a standard test will help the teacher somewhat in appraising reading ability. Additional information may be obtained by observing each child's ability to read and comprehend selections on various topics, chosen from books representing sev-

eral levels of difficulty. To offer effective guidance, the teacher requires not only facts about reading, but also information pertaining to the personal life and social adjustment of each pupil. Some helpful procedures are now available for obtaining this type of data. Interest inventories (which include inquiries concerning play activities, hobbies, vocational preferences, and other interests) may yield clues of value in understanding pupils' attitudes, problems, and adjustment.<sup>1</sup> An interest inventory may be used advantageously to study groups as well as individuals. However, its greatest value will be realized when it is employed informally for individual diagnosis. The administration of an inventory often leads to a desirable pupil-teacher relationship; and it provides a basis for helping pupils select books and choose other types of individually appropriate reading material. Sometimes, the results of an inventory disclose the fact that the teacher's major problem is to help the pupil develop more worthwhile patterns of interest. The data obtained from an inventory should be employed in association with others to afford a sound basis for planning profitable reading experiences for a class or for an individual.

Some teachers are employing anecdotal methods to gain insight concerning pupils' interests and problems, while others are using personal writing to obtain an understanding of the needs of pupils. Through these and other approaches, the teacher may acquire a somewhat valid basis

<sup>1</sup> *The Northwestern University Interest Inventory* may be obtained from the writer.

for suggesting experiences in reading especially valuable to foster personal adjustment. Books, of course, will not be "prescribed" narrowly; nor will reading be the sole method through which improvement will be sought. Varied experience, discussion, and investigation will be significant aspects of the process.

Manifestly, a broad reading program geared to individual needs recognizes a wide variety of reading purposes and employs many types of reading matter — fiction, biography, drama, essays, poetry, informative prose, and so forth. Moreover, this approach implies the use of various kinds of printed matter, including books, magazines, and newspapers. Some of these books will be known to the teacher. Others may be chosen from selected lists such as: *Reading Ladders for Human Relations* (19), *Lenrow's Guide to Prose Fiction* (12), and *Strang's Gateways to Readable Books*. (18) Appropriate short stories may be identified by use of Rue's *Subject Index for Primary Grades*, (16) and Rue's *Subject Index to Books for Intermediate Grades* (15). And books that are suitable for adolescents may be located by employing Brooks' "Integrating Books and Reading with Adolescent Tasks," (3) and LaPlante's and O'Donnell's "Developmental Values through Library Books." (10)

The elementary school teachers will find bibliographies such as the following especially helpful in their quest for books to satisfy "developmental needs": Kircher's *Character Formation Through Books*, (9) Brooks' "Books That Contribute to

Personal Well-Being," (1) and "Books That Contribute to an Understanding of People." (2) Both elementary and secondary teachers will find the *Combined Book Exhibit*, described earlier in this paper, a rich source for the discovery of books to satisfy needs and interests. (13)

### In Conclusion

The foregoing considerations reveal certain characteristics of a developmental program of reading. The program should be planned in such a way that the pupil will enjoy the act of reading as well as the results. To enjoy the act of reading, pupils need direction in the acquisition of the skills necessary for reading fluently, and with a high degree of comprehension, the materials in the various subject fields. In helping the pupil attain these skills, the program emphasizes specialized vocabularies and wide reading.

The developmental approach recognizes the student's purposes and needs for reading at different levels. Some needs relate to common or general attainments; these are referred to as developmental. Other needs are highly personal, but none the less significant for individual adjustment. Obviously some needs are temporary and transient, while others constitute the basis of long range objectives. A worthy developmental program seeks to evaluate these needs and plan for their fulfillment in the most beneficial manner.

A developmental program employs and relies upon other experiences and activities operating in association with reading. Adequate satisfaction for

needs implies an effective relationship of reading to other experiences in the individual's total activity pattern. Direct experiences as well as the experience provided through films and filmstrips are parts of such a program.

Such a program seeks the development, fulfillment, or extension of interests. A concern for interests is a responsibility of good teachers—whether remedial or developmental. The extent to which teachers utilize, extend, and develop interests is a good criterion of the worth of instruction.

Accordingly, a developmental approach to reading recognizes the value of systematic instruction, utilization of interests, fulfillment of developmental needs, and the articulation of experience in reading with other types of worthwhile activity. Through this fourfold approach, steady growth in reading skill is made possible and the attainment of emotional satisfaction is assured.

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*Continued on page 44*

## **What Recent Research Tells Us About Differentiated Instruction in Reading**

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DIFFERENTIATING instruction is the practical means of recognizing individual differences of children. The concern of this procedure, naturally, is with classroom practices and techniques which permit teachers to adjust instruction to learners. Research studies in the area of child development have been copious and revealing. But in the comparison of techniques and methods of instruction, they have been meager and, many times, inconclusive. In the specific area of differentiated instruction applied research is almost non-existent.

The few research investigations reported in this article deal directly or relatedly with differentiation of instruction in the teaching of reading. All of the studies were made within approximately the last three years. Research findings on the materials of reading (including readability), interest inventories, the nature of reading, vocabulary studies, and testing are as basic and necessary as an understanding of individual differences of children. However, these studies are not reported here unless they refer definitely to a comparison of instructional methods. Several investigations in reading readiness and on the use of corrective techniques in the teaching of reading are also included.

Plans that have been used for differentiated classroom instruction are: (1) grouping of children for various reasons or purposes, (2) individualized activities, (3) individualized instruction, and (4) class activities in problem-solving units. Some school administrators use retardation, flexible promotions, acceleration, and the organization of special classes in an attempt to adjust children to their instructional levels. The modern approach is to adjust instruction to the learning levels of children. There is need for more research to point out the merits and weaknesses of these program and organizational patterns.

### **Grouping of Children**

In order to discover whether there are other schools that combine pupils of different age or grade levels and in order to discover what other people are thinking about the grouping of school children, Polkinghorne (19) sent out questionnaires to 435 schools. Of the 225 respondents, thirty-nine percent combine pupils of different age and grade levels for instructional purposes.

The combinations in eighty-eight schools during 1949-50 were: Kindergarten-Grade 1, 14.8 percent; Grades 1-2, 64.8 percent; Grades 2-3, 50 per-

cent; Grades 3-4, 34 percent; Grades 4-5, 14.8 percent; Grades 5-6, 22.7 percent; Grades 1-2-3, 23.9 percent; Grades 4-5-6, 9 percent; and Upper School, 5.6 percent.

Seventy percent of the schools combined grades for administrative reasons, 31 percent to meet the needs of pupils, 18 percent to eliminate grade levels, and 5 percent were based on research.

Although most of the respondents prefer one-grade grouping, the children themselves favored combined grades. A very large number of schools, however, are convinced that there are advantages in combining children of two grade levels. Twenty-eight respondents reported a swing toward elimination of "grade levels." The idea of "continuous progress" was noted on some questionnaires—an indication of a trend toward more individualized programs of learning.

Howell (13) reports an experiment to improve work-study skills in Grades 4 to 8 inclusive. In his school, 264 boys and girls were organized with a fast and a slow section in each grade. The classification was based on four criteria: (1) intelligence quotients, (2) grade equivalents derived from achievement test scores, (3) personal opinion of the teachers, and (4) reasonable recognition of the desires of parents.

The *Iowa Every-Pupil Test of Basic Skills* was used for both diagnosis and measurement of achievement. The experiment was conducted for one year. Units based on the curriculum were taught by the librarian during a weekly library

period. Initial test results revealed that fast groups had acquired the techniques for work-study skills even though these had not been emphasized as such. At the final testing, the fast groups were above the grade norms, and the slow groups showed the greatest improvement.

Two investigations reported the advantages of homogeneous grouping. Williams (27) reviews an experiment on grouping pupils in Grades 4 to 8 on the basis of reading levels. Instruction was adapted to the reading needs of each group. According to the investigator, the results were very satisfactory. She did not indicate whether homogeneity was the total causal factor in the improvement.

In a study of pupils in two or more classes of each grade from three to six, Blumenthal (4) found that for personal educational help homogeneous grouping secured the best results in reading. For such purposes as promoting social adjustment, heterogeneous grouping is preferred. She based these conclusions on teacher judgments of preferred grouping plans and on correlations between achievement in reading on standardized tests and the chronological ages of pupils.

In a study of 462 pupils, organized into sixteen class groups in four elementary schools, Edmiston and Benfer (8) made a study of group achievement and range of abilities within a group. With eliminating slow learners and with the measure and the teachers used, the results indicated better reading achievements in groups with an average range of

40 IQ points than in groups with an average range of 30 IQ points. The critical ratio in favor of the wide-range group was 4.33. The average IQ of the groups was 104.

Shearer and Fannin (20) describe an enriched program for a group of bright pupils in Grades 5 and 6. The experiment lasted eight months. An evaluation of the program showed that gains measured by standardized tests were low, but that in such outcomes as appreciation, growth in related fields of history, travel, and science, and a knowledge of literary forms, they were high.

#### **Remedial Instruction**

In an experiment with eleven boys whose achievement in an individualized remedial reading program had been very unsatisfactory, Janice F. and Carl H. Delacato (7) found that these same boys showed much reading growth as the result of "permissive group instruction." The median gain in reading grade was one year during the six-week session. The boys in the experiment ranged in ages from eight years and six months to thirteen years and eleven months, with IQ's from 98 to 124. Social studies discussions served as a basis for their social and emotional adjustments. There was also an activity period in a well-equipped activity room. Sports and story writing completed the program.

Laffey (15) reports on factors which operate in 400 reading disability cases, cites need for corrective work, lists room equipment and materials, and tells how to interest

children in their remedial work. She gives a number of case records to show that children need more help than they can get in regular classes. Remediation is done in classes of from three to five pupils, which for the most part meet daily. Comparative results were not given.

Stauffer (25) traces all the steps of the kinesthetic-tactile technique and the effects of differentiated instruction in teaching remedial reading to a seriously retarded pupil. The experience approach was used to insure motivation. The results of the experiment were gratifying. Differentiated instruction, according to the writer of the article, succeeded because it was based on "pedagogical and psychological adjustments."

In a study of the effect of remedial instruction on the reading achievement of eighteen pupils in Grades 3B to 7A, Fogler (9) reports significant gains. The gain in the five-month period averaged 1.23 reading grades, with a range from .21 to 2.90. He concludes that if remedial instruction is well planned, it will profit most pupils. The grouping was homogeneous and the instruction was individualized.

In a report of the work of the Dearborn (Michigan) Reading Center, Broadhead (5) states that teachers who have participated in the activities of the Center have a "better understanding of children in general and what constitutes an individual reading problem in particular." Teachers are trained in the use of materials and techniques of instruction in connection with retarded readers. The extent of the

carry-over to the classroom is based on subjective evidence.

### Reading Readiness

Most of the research on reading readiness investigations prior to 1950 was reported by Smith (24) in a review of 136 articles, reports, and books on the subject. She terms the present era in reading readiness as one of "a gradual awakening to the desirability and possibility of applying the readiness concept to all stages of growth in reading and at all levels of maturation." She presents evidence that readiness is influenced by the following factors: physiological, intellectual, emotional, social, and experiential. She cites needed research that covers longer periods of time in checking the relationships between and among these factors.

In a study of comparison between Scottish children and American children to determine the effect of training the Scottish children receive the first year of school, Taylor (26) found a highly significant difference in favor of the Scottish children. The investigator infers that success in reading depends as much on training as on maturation. Gray (10) inquires whether "the Scottish schools are failing to promote the all-round development of children between five and six years of age," and if so, he questions the desirability of emphasizing reading during this age period.

In a study of reading behavior, Ilg and Ames (15) listed a "reading gradient" at various ages from fifteen months to nine years, and read-

ing errors by types at each age level from five years and six months to nine years. The "reading gradient" is a step-by-step outline of the child's reactions to pictures and words, giving attention to order and errors. In relation to reading readiness, they conclude that a child is ready to read "when he has reached a certain, definite stage on a 'reading gradient' and not before, regardless of his chronological age or school placement."

Almy (1) in a study of 106 pupils reported that a significant, positive relationship existed between beginning reading and the pupils' responses to opportunities for reading prior to first grade. Henig (12) found a high degree of correlation between teachers' marks and success in first-year reading.

### Related Studies

In connection with a program of school appraisal, a lack of recreational and supplementary reading materials in elementary school classrooms was noted. The question arose as to how much the books would be used if made available. Mauck and Swenson (17) in reporting this study found that children did take advantage of additional reading material of suitable type.

Olson (18) describes the concepts of *seeking*, *self-selection*, and *pacing* as they apply to the use of books by children. "Pacing," he explains, "refers to the acts on the part of the teacher which ensure that each child is provided with materials upon which he can thrive and also to the attitude which expects

from the child only that which he can yield at his stage of maturity." He reports the results of an experiment in a second grade to illustrate the value of the concept of *self-selection*. He lists also a table of the percentage of children in each grade ready for the various levels of books. The table is to be used as an aid in setting-up the core for the classroom library.

In a study by Shores and Husbands (23) an attempt was made to answer the question of whether fast readers are the best readers. Correlations of .13, .05, and .06 were found between original reading time and comprehension, between total time and comprehension, and between working time and comprehension, respectively. They concluded from this and previous studies that "the relationship between speed of reading and comprehension depends to a large extent upon the purpose set for reading and upon the nature of reading material. With some purposes and some materials, fast readers are the best readers. With other purposes and materials, the best readers will read as slowly or even more slowly than the inefficient readers."

Sheldon and Hatch report the findings of a study of twenty-one good and twenty poor readers in third grade (22) and eighteen good and nineteen poor readers in fourth grade (11). Poor word recognition was evidenced in both poor and good readers. Word-by-word reading, poor phrasing, little or no acquaintance with letter sounds, and a limited sight vocabulary charac-

terized poor readers. Tests revealed a great difference between the two groups in all areas of instruction. The two groups were equated on the basis of: achievement tests in reading, the teachers' ratings of the status of the pupils in reading, and test scores derived from intelligence tests. Teachers were asked to choose for this experiment five percent of their pupils who were good readers and five percent who were poor readers.

A third experiment by Sheldon and Hatch (21) reveals the differences between poor and good readers in sixth grade. The study concerned thirty good and thirty-two poor readers. The difficulties were analyzed by the *Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty test*. On the basis of "t" scores taken from the Stanford-Binet test, the poor readers and the good readers "represent two different types of children." The poor students guessed at words from the general form, showed weakness in individual letter sounds, in unaided recall, and read at a lower rate (two grade levels below their actual placement). Good readers had difficulty with unaided recall and organized recall. Both groups had a higher rate on silent reading than on oral reading and knew letter names and sounds of blends.

Hunt and Sheldon (14) compared nineteen poor and nineteen good readers in ninth grade. On the basis of the *California Test of Mental Maturity*, good readers read on the level of college freshmen and poor readers at the maturity level of normal ninth graders. On the basis of

the *Van Wagenen* test, good readers were reading on the twelfth level and the poor readers were reading as low as the fifth grade level. In the study the importance of adjusting instruction to the varying levels of learning was stressed.

In an investigation on oral reading, Anderson (2) found that poor readers make more mistakes than good readers, that poor readers tend to change the meaning, and that instruction in oral reading should stress the meaning of what is read. In analyzing data for slow and fast readers, Carlson (6) concluded that accuracy of comprehension was dependent upon levels of intelligence, purposes for reading, levels of difficulty of materials, opportunities for referral in answering comprehension questions, and the continuity of the context. At middle and lower levels of intelligence, the slow readers were the better readers; at the higher level of intelligence, the fast readers were the more efficient.

Artley (3) found that the fundamental difference in the specialized subject matter remains the same whether the child learns it through purposeful units of instruction or in connection with daily assignments. He attributes these differences "to the fact that each kind of material has its own body of concepts and vocabulary, its unique relationships, logic and form of presentation, and its distinctive assumptions and basic principles."

#### **In Conclusion**

Studies on differentiation of instruction in reading are too few to

be able to draw some definite conclusions from them. A trend, however, is discernible in most of the studies examined—a trend toward a combination of homogeneous and heterogeneous plans in grouping pupils for instructional purposes. The argument now is not which plan is the better, but how to take advantage of both plans.

Today with a trend toward flexible groupings within the homeroom, teachers can use the advantages of both plans, for it is within their domain to change groupings of children on the basis of the outcomes they wish to derive. Lay people and educators will approve any educational procedure which takes care of children's individual as well as group needs.

Before we can draw definite conclusions in the various areas of instruction, however, we need to know much more than we know today. Research is needed to answer such questions as: Is instruction in reading to be incidental or systematic? For what groups? How much systematic instruction do fast groups require? Should groupings be based on developmental levels in reading? Should groupings be based on the interests of children? On their emotional needs? What are the effects on pupils in belonging to a certain group? How long should groupings be kept together? Should groupings be based on maturation levels of children? These and hundreds of questions like these will have to be answered before we can make a scientific approach to differentiated instruction in reading.

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*Continued on page 44*

## **Parent Readiness for Today's Reading Methods**

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TODAY it is obvious to both parents and educators that we must work together if we are to be successful in helping boys and girls to read and to enjoy doing it. It is a joint enterprise requiring some activities to be carried on at home and others at school. Parents and teachers contribute in different ways to this modern reading program, but the part each must play is important. Parents are in a better position to understand their child's interests, the emotional reactions the child may show to various reading situations, and to create an atmosphere at home when free pleasure type reading can be encouraged. Teachers are in a better position to develop the special skills needed by each child.

Although parents usually do not have the specialized skills and techniques necessary to do the whole job, they should be kept informed about modern reading methods, and the reason for changes that have been brought about since they were in school. They need to understand, too, that teachers are proud of modern reading methods. The records of service men and women from our two World Wars go to show that there has been a marked improvement in reading ability. This is our program with parents.

On the other hand, we are some-

times amazed at the fact that parents are much further ahead than we think in analyzing the reading needs and problems of their boys and girls. A few years ago elementary teachers in a city of moderate size in the Middle West decided to make a self-survey of their reading program, trying to arrive at strong points and weaknesses in the present way in which it is taught. One step in this survey was to have each teacher interview at least three parents and ask such questions as, "What reading experience did your child have in school which you felt helped him in his reading?" and "What reading work or experience did your child not have that you think might have helped him?" These and other similar questions made up the interview sheet used by all teachers.

The amazing result was that parents mentioned most often that extensive reading of library material on a level suited to the child's reading needs seemed to be the experience which helped their child most in reading. In other words, parents were already quite up-to-date in recognizing the value of wide reading in increasing reading power, and in realizing the need for taking into account individual differences. Let us not underestimate the understanding of many parents.

### **Explaining Reading Readiness**

Probably the first hurdle parents have to meet in understanding our present reading program is that of accepting the idea that all children are not ready to start reading at the same chronological age. To most parents first grade is synonymous with learning to read, and to some it is a mark against the reputation of the family to have reading delayed for their child.

Our job as teachers is to help parents first of all to understand what we mean by reading readiness, and then to cooperate in having the child start to read at the time when he can be assured success and satisfaction. It seems easy for parents to understand that not all children start to walk and talk at the same age, but difficult to accept the fact that the same idea of individual differences may apply to an intellectual process like reading readiness.

They need to understand that reading readiness is that stage in the child's development when he can make his first attack on learning to read with confidence, satisfaction, and a good chance for success. They need to know, too, that it involves more than waiting for a sufficiently high mental age, but that it is a natural development plus wise and helpful guidance on the part of both teacher and parent.

After parents have removed from their minds the idea of there being a stigma attached to delayed reading, the next step is to help them to recognize those activities which promote and develop reading readi-

ness. The excursion which the readiness group takes is seen as a part of the program to build an experience background for reading. The sharing period for relating experiences is looked upon as preparation for receiving ideas from the printed page. These activities and many others are looked upon as a part of a planned reading program, and not as marking time. It helps, too, for parents to understand that this delay may mean more rapid progress later on.

Parents have a right to know, too, how we recognize reading readiness in a child, and the qualities which are considered prerequisites for reading. The intelligence test, the reading readiness test, and the teacher's own observation and judgment can be shown as systematic methods of determining when the time is right.

### **The Beginning Reading Stage**

A second hurdle which parents must take if they are to understand and accept the modern reading program comes at the beginning reading stage. Parents wonder about the "whole thought" method used today, and some are doubtful that reading can be introduced in such large units as the sentence or even several sentences, and look back with nostalgia on the time when the single word and even the alphabet formed the starting point for reading. It takes much explanation about the very abstract meaning of words like "was", "than", "which", etc. to show parents that learning these words in isolation is much like learning nonsense syllables.

It also takes a number of opportunities to watch beginning readers at work to prove to them that the thought unit carries more meaning and therefore can be more readily understood. This hurdle is especially hard for the parent whose child is slow in developing independence in reading and who feels that the process could have been speeded up and made more logical if we had only started with the smaller unit, such as the letter or word.

Perhaps we as teachers are partially to blame in not making certain that children do learn to identify the letters of the alphabet as a prerequisite for spelling, and that they gain facility in recognizing single words when they are well started in beginning reading.

#### **Word Recognition Techniques**

A third hurdle for parents has to do with word recognition techniques. To a great many parents phonics seems to be the only known method of identifying unknown words. To them it is synonymous with independence in word recognition. In the parent interviews mentioned earlier in this article as a part of a reading survey, of the 312 parents who were interviewed 91 mentioned phonics as the reading experience which the child did not have that might have helped him. This was mentioned more often than any other weakness in the reading program.

Several conclusions can be reached concerning this feeling on the part of parents. The first one is that perhaps schools are not doing all they

can to give boys and girls techniques for "unlocking" unfamiliar words. Perhaps phonics is not receiving due emphasis in giving boys and girls independence in recognizing new words. If so, we should see that those children who need it receive help.

A second possible answer to this criticism may be that parents do not recognize phonics as it is taught today. Maybe they expect boys and girls to "sound" unfamiliar words and then put them back together again. They may expect them to vocalize sounds of letters and organize families of words containing these letters and families of letters.

If so, we need a better program of familiarizing parents with modern methods of developing these word recognition skills. We need to show them that eye and ear training which helps children to see and hear similarities and differences in words is today's phonics. The child in the nursery school or kindergarten who listens and says "That was my Daddy's car that honked out in front" is evidencing an early ability to differentiate various sounds. The kindergarten teacher who has a child close his eyes while another child speaks to him and has the first child guess which playmate spoke, is giving the child planned ear training that later may help him to hear the similarity and difference between "walk" and "talk."

The parent needs to know that the modern method of "unlocking" a word phonetically is to compare the unknown word with parts of known words, and thus recognize the new one. Then, too, a great deal

can be done to acquaint parents with other tools for word recognition, such as context clues, picture clues, contour of the word and word analysis, which good reading practice employs today.

Phonics is only one tool of several, and in the case of our many unphonetic words furnishes no help. In summary, this hurdle of understanding the modern way of developing word recognition techniques needs explanation and demonstration from teachers.

### **Oral Reading Today**

A fourth difficulty or hurdle for parents to take is concerned with oral reading. To many of today's parents a reading "class" means a daily opportunity for the child to read orally. They identify the ability to read orally with general reading skill. In the survey mentioned previously twenty-one parents seemed to feel that one part of the program which had been neglected was oral reading.

Parents need to be shown that it is quite possible to read orally with much facility and yet to comprehend very little of what is read. This is easy to demonstrate when children lay their books aside and begin to discuss a story orally, or when specific questions are asked after oral reading. Maybe we have been at fault in not having sufficient purposeful oral reading in our daily schedule. The oral reading many parents know, where each person has the same book in his hands and takes a turn reading aloud, has little to recommend it for children be-

yond the beginning reading stage.

Instead, today in the modern classroom there may be a single copy of a book, passed about for children to take turns reading aloud, as they share a good story. This is the kind of oral reading one will see most often in the modern classroom. The reader has a purpose in reading with facility, good enunciation, and expression, and the listener has a purpose in listening because that is necessary if he is to enjoy the story. Not only is the oral reading made purposeful, but good listening habits may be developed by those not doing the actual reading. Library or trade books become increasingly important in the classroom library. Parents often expect every reading period to be carried on in the basic reader.

### **Importance of Silent Reading**

We must also remember to inform the public concerning the relative importance of silent reading activities in our daily living, when compared with the oral reading we do. Therefore we give boys and girls more experience today in reading silently to answer questions, to retell stories, to gather information, and to find main points in a selection. These purposes for silent reading not only call for identification of words, but careful comprehension also. Parents should expect to find more silent reading activities today than oral and should be helped to understand why. Then they should be led to expect a reasonable emphasis on oral reading of the purposeful sort. This will help to change

the notion on the part of many that the child who has not had a "turn" at oral reading on a particular day, has been neglected as far as reading is concerned.

### Helping at Home

The fifth and last hurdle has to do with ways of improving the reading of many children. Usually parents feel that the main method for increasing growth in reading is to provide more drill of the usual sort; drill on words and phrases, drill on phonics, and drill on reading aloud. They are not aware that the most common causes for reading disability are in the emotional blocks which children have. For example, Helen M. Robinson found that one of the most common causes of reading retardation is an unstable emotional climate in the home.<sup>1</sup> She proved that a stable home environment has a definite relationship to reading progress. Virginia M. Axline found that nondirective therapy for disabled second grade readers, letting them read whenever they chose to do so, proved effective.<sup>2</sup>

We should recognize the fact, however, that the emotional block may be concerned with the home, but it may be directly connected with reading. Two high school seniors who came for help with their reading problems, and who could do little above the second or third grade reading level, diagnosed their own

difficulty by saying that a third grade teacher had said that they probably would always be very poor readers. The result was an emotional block against reading.

Parents should be helped to see that the usual remedial techniques may not be the answer; that the real solution may be removing an emotional problem or block that prevents learning.

### Developing Zest for Reading

Closely associated with this, parents need help in realizing that the most powerful motivation for good reading is a zest for and real desire to read. No amount of drill, necessary as it may be, can take children as far as this kind of interest. A group of first grade pupils were clustered about their teacher discussing their favorite books. On the teacher's lap lay a brand new book, unopened. Each child had a turn naming the favorite book he had read that year. One little boy became more and more impatient as was evidenced by his moving forward to the edge of his chair, and finally burst out, "If you would ever let me look inside that new book, I'm sure that would be my favorite." Parents should understand the motivating power of that kind of interest, because they can do much to promote it.

Five hurdles for many parents in understanding the modern reading program have been mentioned: lack of understanding of reading readiness, lack of knowledge of the larger thought unit in teaching beginning

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*Continued on page 44*

## **What Other Magazines Are Saying About the Teaching of Reading**

*Reviewed by Muriel Potter  
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"Needed Research in Reading." William S. Gray. *Elementary English*, February, 1952.

Perhaps it is not surprising that we are still seeking newer and more effective means of teaching reading, if Professor Gray can (and does) enumerate ten basic questions about the reading process which have not yet been answered by research. Dr. Gray also names ten out of "hundreds of classroom problems" which are yet to be solved with regard to teaching reading, and still another ten questions about the reader himself which remain to be answered by research investigations.

His questions as to the place of reading in the life of our rapidly changing culture are especially important, and he discusses briefly but pointedly the following:

What changes, if any, are taking place in the dominant role of reading in many aspects of contemporary life?

What are the various functions that reading should serve in the lives of different groups of people?

What is the role of personal reading in the lives of children and young people who have access to and make wide use of radio, television, and the cinema?

What are the reasons why a sur-

prisingly large number of both children and adults are not attracted to reading as a desirable form of leisure activity and how can this situation be corrected?

What are the types of growth through reading that are of greatest significance today and how can the ends sought be most effectively attained?

What should be the focus of attention in developing reading attitudes and skills adapted to contemporary needs?

What is the nature and extent of the emotional disturbances created among children and youth by the tempo and distracting conditions of contemporary life that interfere with progress in reading?

How should instruction in reading be organized in order to provide more effectively for individual differences among pupils in each school grade or class and at the same time take advantage of the values inherent in group activities?

What changes are essential in the reading program of specific schools and school systems in order to adjust them better to current needs and to overcome specific weaknesses inherent in them?

This article is recommended reading in spite of the fact that it is in

fine print and tucked away toward the back of the journal.

\* \* \*

"Historical Turning Points in the Teaching of Reading." Nila Banton Smith. *NEA Journal*, May, 1952.

Professor Smith briefly outlines the ways in which reading purposes and instruction have been changing ever since the North American continent received the first Europeans. She sees 1952 as another turning point when "the demand at the moment is for a streamlined type of reading ability geared to the tempo of modern life." She is optimistic about the rate at which teachers are learning how to make use of their new insights into semantics, critical reading and the reading process.

\* \* \*

"Should Boys Enter School Later Than Girls?" Frank W. Pauly. *NEA Journal*, January, 1952.

Dr. Pauly asked a first grade teacher, a parent (who is also a school board member), a child development specialist, an elementary school principal, a county superintendent and a city superintendent for their reactions to this question. Every teacher of kindergarten and primary grades will be keenly interested in their responses.

#### About Reading Materials

"The Best of the Recent Children's Books." *Elementary English*, April, 1952.

Thirty members of this journal's reviewing staff were asked to "nominate approximately 10 of the best children's books, for each of three

age levels, that appeared in the fall of 1951."

The titles of the books, together with the number of votes for each, are grouped under the headings *Pre-School and Primary*, *Pre-adolescence*, and *Adolescence*. There are about 200 titles. Eight titles for young children received 10 votes or more, eight additional titles at the pre-adolescence level received 10 votes or more, and four titles at the adolescence level received 10 votes or more.

This list should be of value to teachers, for it points to agreement, as high in the case of some titles as 70%, on the part of reviewers, on the outstanding qualities of the books nominated.

\* \* \*

"Informational Books — Tonic and Tool for the Elementary Classroom." Herbert S. Zim. *Elementary English*, March, 1952.

"In essence all books . . . are informational. . . . Some authors are less concerned with writing science, industrial arts or social studies books than in tackling a specific, significant idea for children and doing their best with it. They stake their bet on a child wanting to have and use an attractive book about something that interests him, in contrast to offering him a general book on an artificial school subject. . . . There are probably over 500 informational books in print and at least half that number are worthy of teachers' special attention.

Professor Zim stresses the "happy blend of text and illustration that fully supplement each other." He names children's books of the last

ten years that have made effective instructional use of illustration. He writes in praise of the quality of writing which makes a short book provide a great amount of information and yet remain readable for children.

Such books require careful selection of content for accuracy, but accuracy at the child's level, not the research scientist's. They require selection of factual material, the avoidance of unnecessary generalities, and the characteristic of "specificity." They should and do suggest experiments and activities for the child reader, and also for the teacher. Informational books written for younger readers, with clear illustrations and large type, are also useful for the slow reader of Grades 3-6.

Professor Zim concludes a stimulating article with the statement that such informational books are one means of helping children to a secure understanding of the environmental realities of the adult world and so toward maturity.

\* \* \*

"Helpful Books to Use with Retarded Readers." Nila Banton Smith. *Elementary School Journal*, March 1952.

Professor Smith has placed on her list many books whose interest level is two or more grades higher than their level of reading difficulty. Some material can be found in this list which is suitable for each level of reading ability, but there is of course far more material available for those children of junior high school level and above whose reading skills ap-

proximate fourth through sixth grade level. Those books with controlled vocabulary which have been written for retarded readers head the list, but an encouraging number of graded readers, pamphlets and supplemental books not originally intended for the retarded reader are being found well suited to use in corrective or remedial work. Professor Smith lists many of the basal reading series as equally valuable for these purposes.

"Pupils who have developed an aversion to reading . . . must be supplied with special materials based on particular topics which are entertaining and engaging to them personally. . . . For these few cases, basic readers usually are not appropriate. . . . The writer's experience has been, however, that the majority of these older pupils, at third-grade reading level and beyond, *want* to learn to read and that basic readers are the best medium to use in giving quick control of reading skills."

This helpful article also contains a recommended list of reading workbooks, manuals and practice exercises, and a directory of publishers.

#### **On Teaching Techniques and Procedures**

"The Reading Center: An In-Service Training Program." Clare A. Broadhead. *Elementary School Journal*, February, 1952.

This article describes a project by means of which, in the schools of Dearborn, Michigan, a reading center provides both assistance for children who need special help and observation and training for teachers

in the school system. The materials used in the center are enumerated. The screening process by which children are selected for special help is outlined. Successive groups of five teachers spend six weeks at the center, working with two or three children every morning and devoting afternoons to conference and workshop periods, making home visits, and observing in classrooms. When teachers are selected for this special training, their places are temporarily filled by substitutes.

The writer expresses confidence in the value of this program, although she explains that "there are as yet no objective data with regard to the carry-over to classroom teaching."

\* \* \*

"Individualizing Reading." Frances Maib. *Elementary English*, February, 1952.

A thoughtful discussion of the way in which grouping still fails to meet the needs of children who are developing at different rates and progressing in reading at varied paces. Professor Maib suggests planning reading activities on an individual basis, so that as children work alone or in pairs, the teacher is free to give individual help. For such a program, of course, textbooks of many publishers and of a number of grades must be available in each classroom.

Professor Maib believes this individualized program can be used successfully in large classes and with beginning readers, and has already seen it so used with success. She has also obtained the opinions of

children on the individualized teaching of reading, and finds them favorable.

In conclusion, she states her belief that such a program enables children to read more material and to avoid the stigmas which are often attached to comparisons between "slow" and "fast" readers or "good" and "poor" readers.

\* \* \*

"Teacher Purposes vs. Pupil Purposes in Reading." E. W. Dolch. *Elementary School Journal*, January, 1952.

This penetrating article may be summed up by the author's own conclusions:

"Two sets of purposes must always be before us—the child's purpose to have a good time and to get the story or the meaning, and the teacher's purpose to have the children learn the habits, the word meanings, the sight vocabulary, and the word attack that they need. Good teaching always includes both."

Dr. Dolch stresses that the teacher must motivate re-reading for her purposes, which are provision of practice in word recognition or comprehension, while the motivation must be in terms of interest and satisfaction for the child, not merely practice.

Every teacher will appreciate this thoughtful article.

For information about the ICIRI write Dr. Donald L. Cleveland, Exec. Secty, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa.

## **News of the Reading Council**

*by Donald L. Cleland*

*Executive Secretary-Treasurer, ICIRI*

*ICIRI Headquarters, Reading Laboratory*

*University of Pittsburgh*

The Gerald A. Yoakam Council, University of Pittsburgh, sponsored a luncheon for the Eighth Annual Reading Conference which was held at the University of Pittsburgh on July 23. The luncheon was attended by 93 members. The guest speaker was Dr. Donald Durrell of Boston University.

Mr. Daniel Hargis from Clyde Park, Montana, has sent in the names of five new members who are interested in forming a local council in that area.

Miss Mary J. Francis, Director of Elementary Education Board of Education, Newark, New Jersey, is interested in forming a local council in the vicinity of Newark.

A local Council at Hamilton County, Chattanooga, Tennessee, is in the process of organization. Mrs. Eula A. Johnson, Supervising Teacher of Hamilton County, has sent the names of twelve members who will form the nucleus of the group.

At Indiana State Teachers College, Indiana, Pennsylvania, a group of seven teachers met and organized a Local Council. It is called the Indiana State Teachers College Council. Mrs. Agnes C. Smith has taken an active part in organizing the council.

A Council at Neshanic, New Jersey has been organized. Miss Flor-

ence E. Sutphin reports that the group is enthusiastic.

We are truly an international organization with members in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Canada, Turkey, and Nova Scotia.

Your Executive Secretary-Treasurer has sent a supply of brochures to each State Chairman. Six new councils are in the process of organization. This is most gratifying. Why not organize a local council in your area? **THE READING TEACHER** can be used for discussion groups. It contains a wealth of material and can form the basis for a most informative and provocative meeting. Write your executive secretary-treasurer for instructions in forming a local council. He will gladly supply you with copies of the new brochure.

If the Board of Governors, those who write the articles, and our Editor, give freely of their time and energy in directing the activities of the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction, then it behooves each of you to help us. Get other teachers interested in joining the I.C.I.R.I. or better yet, get at least five other members and form a local council.

We have over 1600 members at the present time. A goal of 2500 members has been set for 1952-53.

### **Recent Research**

*Continued from page 33*

- ther J. "A Study of Children's Recreational Reading." *Elementary School Journal* 50: 144-50; November 1949.
18. Olson, Willard C. "Seeking, Self-selection, and Pacing in the Use of Books by Children." *The Packet* (Heath's Service Bulletin for Teachers.) 7: 3-10; Spring 1952.
19. Polkinghorne, Ada R. "Grouping Children in the Primary Grades." *Elementary School Journal* 50: 502-08; May 1950.
20. Shearer, Elga G. and Fannin, Lois C. "Reading for the Bright Child." *Library Journal* 74: 1289-91; September 1949.
21. Sheldon, William D. and Hatch, Shirley P. "Strengths and Weaknesses in Reading of a Group of Ninth-Grade Children." *Elementary English* 28: 86-93; February 1951.
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23. Shores, Harlan and Husbands, Kenneth L. "Are Fast Readers the Best Readers?" *Elementary English* 27: 52-57; January 1950.
24. Smith, Nila Banton. "Readiness for Reading." *Elementary English* 27: 31-39; 91-106; January, February 1950.
25. Stauffer, Russell G. "Certain Basic Concepts in Remedial Reading." *Elementary School Journal* 51: 334-42; Feb., 1951.

26. Taylor, Christian D. "The Effect of Training on Reading Readiness." *Studies in Reading*. Vol. 2. (Compiled by W. D. Ritchie.) London: University of London Press, 1950. p. 64-80.
27. Williams, Pauline L. "Some Group Reading Results." *Chicago Schools Journal* 31: 90-94; October 1949.

### **Materials**

*Continued from page 26*

- tions. Washington, D.C.: The American Council of Education, 1947.
20. Witty, Paul. "Children's Needs —The Basis for Language Problems" in *Pupils Are People*, Nellie Appy (chm.). National Council of Teachers of English. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951. Chap. III, pp. 37-58.
21. Witty, Paul. (Adapted from) "Promoting Growth and Development Through Reading." *Elementary English*, Vol. XXVII (December, 1950), pp. 493-500.

### **Parent Readiness**

*Continued from page 38*

reading, a narrow notion of word recognition help, an overemphasis on a traditional type of oral reading, and a lack of understanding of the emotional factor in promoting reading. Let us not assume that all parents have these same hurdles to take to be brought up-to-date, but let us make sure they understand why we are trying to teach reading as we do today.

## In Elementary School

Continued from page 16

classroom organization fails to function smoothly in the beginning. Until the chairmen have adjusted to their responsibilities and the pupils have acquired a feeling for group work, the teacher may expect some chaos. However, this will change as pupils and teacher adjust to the process.

4. *Don't anticipate immediate results from pupil-teacher planning and evaluating.* This type of planning may be an innovation in many schools. Both pupils and teachers will need to allow time to familiarize themselves with this daily routine.

5. *Don't expect the chairman of each group to assist in "checking" the papers for his group during the first week.* You may find it necessary to

check all the skills assigned for follow-up work (seat work) until the chairman has had an opportunity to adjust to his other responsibilities.

6. *Don't rely on Teachers' Guides and Manuals as the sole means of developing and maintaining reading skills.* You will need to have many ideas and methods of your own.

Just how far a given school in a given community can go in meeting the needs of its individual pupils depends largely upon the philosophy and qualifications of the classroom teachers. The schools and the homes share the opportunity for training citizens of tomorrow. Accepting this responsibility, we need to take our place in the cooperative enterprise of preparing each individual according to his needs.

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### **In the Next Issue**

*Readiness for Reading* will be the theme for a group of articles in the November issue of **THE READING TEACHER**. The keynote will be set by Dr. Gertrude Hildreth of Brooklyn College in a very stimulating article entitled *Growing Up in Reading*. This sets the stage by showing the relation between reading readiness and educational readiness.

Dorothy E. Cook of the New York State Department of Education will discuss readiness as it applies in kindergarten. Similar reports will be made on reading readiness at various grade levels through the grades and high school.

Dr. Esther Milner will report on research she has done on the relation of reading readiness to the oral language facility of a group of first graders.

In addition, Dr. Dorothea McCarthy of Fordham University will prepare an article on *Language and Personality Development*. And Barbara Leibmann will tell of her work with a group of third grade non-readers. For these articles and many more turn to the next **READING TEACHER** in November.